

REMARKS:

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

To expedite prosecution, the Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 14. Furthermore, the Applicants have amended claims 8, 9, 11 and 13 to make them consistent with prior changes in claim 1. Specifically, the etching step, which was originally step d) is presently step e). The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter in the claims as originally filed in a later-filed continuation application. New claims 26-34 depend from claim 16 and recite features that can be found e.g., in original claims 2-15. As such, no new matter is being entered with these claims.

The Applicants submit that these amendments are permissible under 37 CFR 1.116 since they put claims in allowable form, cancel rejected claims or, in the alternative, place the claims in better form for consideration in the event of an appeal.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 14-16 and 24

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 USC 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-9, 11-13 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,747,353 to Bashir et al. (hereinafter Bashir).

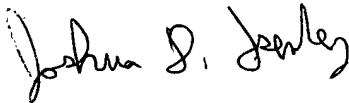
The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. The rejections with respect to the canceled claims are moot. The Applicant has amended claim 1 to include features formerly in claim 14, which has been indicated as allowable. Therefore, claim 1 as it presently stands is allowable over the prior art of record. Furthermore, claims 2-9 and 11-13, 15 and 23 depend, either directly or indirectly on claim 1 and recite additional features therefor. As such, and for the same reasons set forth above, these dependent claims define an invention suitable for patent protection.

New claims **26-34** depend, either directly or indirectly from claim **16** and recite additional features therefore. Claim **16** has been indicated as allowed by the Examiner. As such new claims **26-34** are allowable by virtue of their dependence from claim **16**.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, the Applicant submits that all claims are allowable over the cited art and define an invention suitable for patent protection. Furthermore, for the reasons set forth above, the Applicant submits that the claims are neither vague nor indefinite. The Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner enter the amendment, reconsider the application, and issue a Notice of Allowance in the next Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,



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